



Remarks For

The Hon. Steven C. Preston
Administrator
U.S. Small Business Administration

Delivered At

**NATIONAL AWARDS LUCHEON- HONORING
STATE SMALL BUSINESS AWARD WINNERS**
Washington, DC

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12:00 pm

Thank you, Warren.

Welcome back everyone. I hope you have enjoyed yourselves during the course of our events. We have an exciting program scheduled for you today.

I would like to thank our distinguished guest speakers, Massachusetts Senator and Chairman of the US Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship John Kerry, Senior Vice President for Marketing, Research and Insights for Sam's Club Matt Kistler, and SBA Inspector General Eric Thorson, for joining us this afternoon.

This luncheon wraps up our award ceremonies for Small Business Week 2007 and what better way to close then by honoring our small business persons of the year, along with our SCORE Chapter of the Year Award.

Congratulations to all our winners today. Your accomplishments are outstanding and you should be extremely proud of yourselves.

As many of you know, being small business owners is not an easy road. You have to be willing to take risks others won't take. You must work around the clock if necessary. And you are not only the CEO, but the head of sales, head of finance and you do whatever else it takes. I often say, small business owners match every dollar of equity with \$10 of sweat

equity.

But that's also why small business owners are successful where others are not.

The President's Small Business Goals

I believe biggest advocate of small business ownership we have in the federal government is the man at the top. Our President recognizes the tremendous contributions that small businesses make to our economy and our society, but also that the road to business ownership can be bumpy.

The President has often said that the role of government is to create and sustain an environment which allows small businesses to flourish and grow, and he has been a tireless champion on issues most important to the small businesses of our country – access to affordable health care, fair tax policy, and fair regulatory standards.

The President proclaimed, “We are working to keep taxes low to help small businesses continue to expand. We are taking steps to make health care more affordable and available for small business owners and employees by encouraging Health Savings Accounts, supporting Association Health Plans legislation, and proposing a standard tax deduction for health insurance.”

The President has proposed making health care premiums up to a certain level tax deductible for all Americans, whether or not those are in the form of employer compensation or paid for by the individual. It would, once again, put everyone on the same playing field and give more affordable access to those Americans outside the system today.

The President has also made permanent tax relief a top priority. The tax relief enacted during this Administration, including the tax relief benefiting America's small businesses, is scheduled to expire over the next several years. Raising taxes on small businesses will hurt economic growth and job creation. We have to work to make these reforms lasting.

Small Business and the Economy

Since August 2003, almost 8 million jobs have been created in our country. Our economy has now added jobs for 43 straight months. And American workers are taking home more pay with those jobs. Real after-tax income per person has risen by 10 percent – or \$2,900 for the average family– since the President took office.

Such growth occurs in large measure because of the perseverance and productivity of our Nation's entrepreneurs. Small businesses drive our economy. As I've said before, they create two-thirds of the new jobs and represent half of our non-farm private GDP. They drive much of the

innovation in our country that keeps our economy vibrant and competitive.

America has an economy that regenerates, is flexible, and adapts to opportunity in large part because our entrepreneurial culture has taught us to dream, to see possibilities, and to act on these possibilities.

Entrepreneurialism is in our national DNA and it is an underpinning of our country's greatness.

The spirit of entrepreneurship and small business ownership is an essential part of our nation's DNA. Small businesses drive innovation that keeps our country competitive, provide opportunity to millions of Americans who may not find it elsewhere and enable transformation in communities that need economic revitalization.

Small business in Communities

Small businesses also have the power to drive transformation in our more depressed communities by bringing jobs and services and opportunity to places where they have often been in short supply, and by giving ownership to people in those communities.

Let me pause for a second and talk about communities – something I talk about a lot:

- Communities are where we live

- They are where we raise our children and see their surroundings shape them
- Communities are the heart of who we are as a country
- They are for each of us.... our America
- And they are where we see the hope of a vibrant, free society become a reality....or not.

And to the extent that you, business owners, are located in urban neighborhoods or in rural areas that need more support, you are enabling the kind of transformation that can change the game for those communities and the people whose lives are based in them.

We at the SBA are particularly interested in being a partner in your success story. That is why we need thoughtful, fiscally responsible policies to unleash the power of entrepreneurial capitalism in underserved markets in this country. Driving successful, sustainable, business formation into underserved markets can *CHANGE THE GAME* for millions of Americans.

What we do

In order to sustain small business growth in our economy and help small businesses drive transformation in our communities, it is part of SBA's mission to provide services and programs to assist small businesses along the way.

Over the years, the agency has helped many of our best known corporate icons get their starts. Intel, AOL, Outback Steakhouse, Apple, Amgen, Ben & Jerry's, Callaway Golf, Staples, Under Armour, NIKE, and FedEx all received help from one of SBA's programs.

Today, we continue to help entrepreneurs in numerous ways. For example:

- The SBA lends or guarantees more than \$78 billion in loans and investments. Over the last six years, SBA lending has doubled and lending to minority entrepreneurs has increased over 150%.
- Last year, SBA and its technical assistance partners counseled approximately 1.42 million entrepreneurs and the number of entrepreneurs receiving SBA counseling is up 40 percent. Also last year, the SBA website received 26 million hits.
- In the area of procurement, we have tightened the rules, insisted on clean data and we have put performance measures not only to be accountable, but to also be transparent.
- Through its Office of Advocacy, SBA helps protect small business from harmful new government regulations, and through its National Ombudsman, it helps small business deal with unfair application of existing regulations.

Conclusion

We want you to continue to be successful, help strengthen our economy

and help to better our communities, and the SBA is here to help you along the way.

In the words of President Bush:

“If you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of our country. The more ownership there is in America, the more vitality there is in America, and the more people have a vital stake in the future of this country.”

I believe that ownership anchors us in what is important for our businesses, for our employees, for our communities, and for America.

We want entrepreneurs to think big because it means jobs for Americans, it means greater competitiveness in a rapidly changing marketplace, and it can mean transformation for the underserved communities in our country. Our award winners today reflect the vitality of this country.

I would like to thank you for participating in our 2007 Small Business Week events these past two days. I would like to once again congratulate all our winners and I wish you continued success.

Senator John Kerry Introduction

I am very pleased to introduce our next special guest speaker, Senator John Kerry of Massachusetts. A 22-year veteran of the Senate, he is the past

and current chairman of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship , as well as chairman of the subcommittee on Science, Technology and Innovation of the committee on Commerce and the subcommittee on Near Eastern and South and Central Asian Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations.

He is a dedicated leader working to promote and protect the interests of small business. Senator Kerry and I both agree that small businesses are the backbone of our expanding economy.

A veteran himself, Senator Kerry is especially interested working to improve opportunities for veteran small business owners, an area of significant importance in a time where soldiers are coming home from war and a growing area of focus for the SBA. In fact, just last month Senator Kerry and Senator Chuck Hagel from Nebraska introduced legislation to provide financial relief as well as increased economic opportunities to America's veterans and reservists who want to start or expand a small business.

On a personal note, I just want to thank him for his partnership on small business issues -- he cares deeply about our issues -- and for the gracious welcome he has extended to me as a newcomer to Washington.

Ladies and gentlemen, please give a warm welcome to the Senator from
Massachusetts, John Kerry.